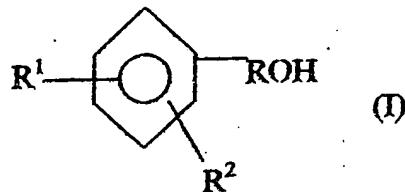


What is claimed is:

1. A method for the topical treatment of ectoparasites, their nymphs, and their eggs on mammalian skin and hair comprising the steps of:
 - 5 A) applying a water-soluble or water-dispersible, pharmacologically acceptable composition containing at least one pesticidally-active monohydric aralkyl alcohol to areas of mammal skin and hair infected with ectoparasites wherein
 - a) the composition contains a quantity of monohydric aralkyl alcohol sufficient to provide pesticidal activity against the ectoparasites,
 - 10 b) the composition is applied to the infected areas in a quantity sufficient to completely saturate both the hair and the skin in the infected areas, and
 - c) the composition can be readily washed out of the infected areas by rinsing with water;
 - B) leaving the composition in contact with the skin and hair in the infected areas until at least most of the ectoparasites have been killed; and
 - C) removing the composition and the dead ectoparasites from the skin and hair by rinsing the skin and hair with water or other aqueous based liquid.
- 20 2. The method of claim 1 wherein in step A) said composition is a substantially air-impermeable barrier composition.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein in step B) the composition is left in contact with the skin and hair for a period of at least about 2 minutes.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein the composition is left in contact with the skin and hair for a period of at least about 3 minutes.
5. The method of claim 3 wherein the composition is left in contact with the skin and hair for a period of at least about 5 minutes.
6. The method of claim 3 wherein the period is from about 2 minutes to about 10 minutes.
7. The method of claim 3 wherein the composition is left in contact with the skin and hair for a period of from about 3 minutes to about 9 minutes.
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8. The method of claim 2 wherein in step A) the at least one monohydric aralkyl alcohol has the formula:



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wherein R is a C₁-C₁₂ straight or branched chain, saturated or olefinitely unsaturated alkylene group, and R¹ and R² are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, halogen, and C₁-C₄ alkoxy groups.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein in formula (I) R is a C₁-C₆ saturated alkylene group.
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10. The method of claim 8 wherein the at least one monohydric aralkyl alcohol is benzyl alcohol.
11. The method of claim 1 wherein the mammal is a human being.
12. The method of claim 2 wherein the mammal is a human being.

13. The method of claim 2 wherein the composition is in the form of a water-containing gel.
14. The method of claim 2 wherein the ectoparasites are lice and in step B) at least some of the nits as well as the lice have been killed.
- 5 15. The method of claim 2 wherein the method steps are carried out once, and then again after a time interval.
16. The method of claim 15 wherein the time interval ranges from about 1 week to about 3 weeks.
17. The method of claim 14 wherein the lice are head lice.
- 10 18. The method of claim 2 wherein step C) is carried out by rinsing with water.
19. The method of claim 2 wherein in the composition in step A) the at least one monohydric aralkyl alcohol is the only pesticidal component of the composition.
20. The method of claim 2 wherein the composition in step A) also contains at least one of the following additional components:
- 15 a film forming agent,
- a surface active agent,
- a gelling or thickening agent.
21. The method of claim 20 wherein the composition contains all of said additional components.
- 20 22. The method of claim 2 wherein the composition in step A) contains from about 1 to about 20% by weight of at least one monohydric aralkyl alcohol, based on the weight of the composition.

23. The method of claim 2 wherein the composition in step A) contains from about 2 to about 20% by weight of at least one monohydric aralkyl alcohol.
24. The method of claim 2 wherein the composition in step A) contains from about 2 to about 9% by weight of at least one monohydric aralkyl alcohol.
- 5 25. The method of claim 2 wherein the composition in step A) contains from about 3 to about 7% by weight of at least one monohydric aralkyl alcohol.
26. The method of claim 2 wherein the composition in step A) contains from about 4 to about 6% by weight of at least one monohydric aralkyl alcohol.
- 10 27. The method of claim 2 wherein the composition in step A) contains from about 1 to about 4% by weight of benzyl alcohol.
28. The method of claim 22 wherein the monohydric aralkyl alcohol is benzyl alcohol.
29. The method of claim 23 wherein the monohydric aralkyl alcohol is benzyl alcohol.
- 15 30. The method of claim 24 wherein the monohydric aralkyl alcohol is benzyl alcohol.
31. The method of claim 25 wherein the monohydric aralkyl alcohol is benzyl alcohol.
32. The method of claim 26 wherein the monohydric alcohol is benzyl alcohol.
- 20 33. The method of claim 2 wherein step C) is carried out for from about 1 to about 5 minutes.
34. The method of claim 2 wherein step C) is carried out for from about 1 to about 3 minutes.

35. The method process of claim 2 wherein more than 95% of the ectoparasites are killed.
36. The method of claim 15 wherein more than 99% of the ectoparasites are killed.
- 5 37. The method of claim 1 wherein the ectoparasites are lice.
38. The method of claim 7 wherein the lice are head lice.
39. The method of claim 2 in which component A) is present in a quantity sufficient to prevent a head louse from closing its spiracle and to provide pediculicidal activity against the head louse, its nymphs, and its nits.
- 10 40. The method of claim 14 wherein the pesticidally-active monohydric aralkyl alcohol is benzyl alcohol; in step B) the composition is left in contact with the skin and hair for a period of at least about 2 minutes; the lice are head lice; benzyl alcohol is the only pesticidal component of the composition in step A); the composition in step A) contains from about 1 to about 20% benzyl alcohol; and the mammal is a human being.
- 15 41. The method of claim 40 wherein in step B) the composition is left in contact with the skin and hair for at least about 5 minutes; and the composition in step A) also contains at least one of a film forming agent, a surface active agent, and a gelling or thickening agent.
- 20 42. The method of claim 41 wherein the composition in step A) contains from about 3 to about 7% benzyl alcohol.
43. The method of claim 40 wherein the method steps are carried out once, and then again after a time interval.

44. The method of claim 43 wherein the time interval ranges from about 1 week
to about 3 weeks.

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